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CAMILLA,

OR,

Twenty-four Hours on the Potomac.

BY

J. A. ROCHFORD, O. P.,

LOUISVILLE, KY.

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DEDICATION

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AUTHOR.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE PIOUS AND AMIABLE CHILDREN

OF THE

CONFRATERNITY OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY,

whose prayers are miraculous, whose virtures are unequaled, and whose pathway through life is strewn with the fruits of humility and charity and patience,

CAMILLA,

with her faith,

her devotion to the Mother of God in the Chaplet,

her courage amidst disaster, and

her triumph by sacrifice,

is humbly and respectfully

dedicated by the

AUTHOR.

The poem, Camilla, was written during the Lent of 1881 as a relaxation from graver duties. Never intended for publication, it is only now put in type, that personal friends may criticise, correct and amend it. The Author devoutly hopes that the twenty-five copies completing this edition will be returned to him, full of annotations and improvements; and in the hereafter, should CAMILLA be considered worthy of an humble place in our literature, he will be only too happy to give her to the world of thought and religion. Poesy is too beautiful a field to be trodden by every foot. Only the highly spiritual can gather the flowers of its eternal spring-time without injury or destruction. Hence the Author's solicitude—yes, anxiety—lest having tresspassed on so beautiful a meadow, he might crush the floret concealed to eyes as aged and gross as his. Let my friends be vigilant, and guard the heavy feet that dared to enter so flowery a field; or, if preferable, let them generously say: "Get over the fence! This soil is hallowed. Only the elect can tread it." And the Author, touched to the quick, by the loss of his CAMILLA, will thank his friends for having saved her from public animadversion. J. A. R.

Approach. Seraphic Love, from realms serene,
To nerve my fancy, choicest thoughts convene,
That soaring aloft amid the ethereal air,
My soul, accordant, may forever share
Thy numbers flowing, thy melodious strains,
Thy grand harmonics and thy bold refrains—
May chant those beauties, lately unexplored,
By poets sung, by prophets near adored;
May sing, Oh! Seraph, of the empyrean arch
Spanning creation's endless, stately march;
Of Angels, men, of planets, stars, the world,
Marching, deploying with banners bright, unfurled,
Marching with measured step and dauntless tread
Through trackless void--past comets lost or dead;
Marching exultant, countermarching through
To greet perfection in that long review,
And hail sweet Mary, Virgin, Mother, Queen,
The peerless creature of this marching scene,
Who fills the enskied arch from pole to pole
With gorgeous splendors of her sunlike soul.

Yes, sing of Mary, fairest, first and best
By God beloved, by all creation blest,
Who wooes to suffering hearts calm, sweet repose,
And lends her fragrance to the blushing rose--
Then chant Potomac's bluffs and sylvan lawns
And not of Pagan nymphs or Grecian fawns;
Of dear Camilla, floweret of its vales,
Whose odorous bloom each shady nook regales;
Of loves requited doomed on earth to die
Then endless quicken in the starry sky.
Ah! haste, oh! Seraph on thy noiseless wing
And o'er my imagination gracious bring
Thy boundless love, thy efficacious aid,
To sing of Mary and Potomac's Maid.

CHAPTER I.

The lazy cloudlets of the western sky
Hung calmly crimsoned round the dome on high,
When whistling shrilly the Lady of the Lake,[1]
Heaving her chains with many a nervous shake,
Pushed from her moorings, when tourists aboard
Their farewells uttered and glib gladness roared;
Her merry cabins rang with boisterous glee,
Whilst eyes distended wandered far to see
The grand Potomac blessed with fruitful spawns,
With lowing kine, with ducks and arch-necked swans;
To see the Arsenal where tyrants came,
Bartering their honor and the Nation's fame
For her[2] life's blood, who guiltless of the fate
That fell with fury on the frenzied state
Invoked in vain the Heavens against the cry
That shook the earth and pierced the frowning sky;
For freedom from her eyrie long had flown,
Leaving the felon's gibbet a martyr's throne.

1 Steamer on Potomac. 2 Mrs. Surratt.

To see those slope o'er Anacostia rise
In undulations to the distant skies,
And Washington still fading from our sight
With Georgetown College on Parnassian hight.
Dear Alma Mater, through thy Mantuan groves
How oft, how sad, my venturing spirit roves
To learn if lounging neath thy beechen shade
Some kindred souls may not old trysts pervade;
To talk of halcyon days—the long ago—
Of sequent sorrows and relentless woe.
Oh, kind old mother! Oft thine arms have kept
Close round my heart when passion o'er it swept:
And clinging there, thy whispering yet recalls
The wisdom learnt within thy classic halls.
But clasp me fonder through the future years
As Death's gaunt face across my path appears;
And when victorious, he my corpse shall claim,
Its heart, inscribed with love, shall bear thy name.

See Arlington, beneath whose sylvan swards
Sleep thousands of the Nation's fallen wards
Resting so calmly from the appalling strife,
That tried brave hearts and palsied freedom's life:

Their tents are songless, campfires laugh no more,
A deathly stillness guards yon pebbly shore,
Save Angels' footsteps on the gravelly way,
Bringing meet guerdon to the Blue and Gray.
O! Attic rest! Could glory heap on thee
Thou home of honor, greatness, chivalry,
Grander than lights the hearth of peerless Lee,
It is the friendship beaming o'er the graves,
Hallowed by Northern hearts and Southern braves.
Oh! let remembrance o'er them flowers strew
Till angel drummers beat the last tattoo;
Then wake to glory with great Sparta's band
To carve, on pillars everlasting grand,
Each dear remembered, each yet unknown name,
To glow like diamonds on the walls of fame.
Ah! pause, O patriot, in thy grand career,
To breathe a prayer and leave thy tribute here.
Still on! our splashing wheels new waves pursue
As timbers creaking mock the merry crew,
Till we beneath the lengthening shades descry
Great steeples, ships and houses passing by.
'Tis Alexandria! Oh, friendly town,

We love thy grass-grown streets, thy past renown;
Thy brow, though furrowed by the plough of Time,
Will wear e'en yet an aureole sublime,
For thou wilt be renewed in enterprise
When mammonists will not monopolize.
Better thy children blest with what they need
Than rich in commerce, rich in lust and greed;
Better thy cobble-stones with sweet content
Than paved with gold, and probity all spent.
Oh! happy home, to memory, childhood dear,
My homage greets thee with affection's tear.

Near yonder shades where stands the blessed cross
Where tombstones crumbling grow with tufted moss,
Where the azure canopies the herbage green
And Hunting Creek surrounds the mournful scene,
Are urned the ashes of my parents dear
Resting from pain this many a doleful year.
'Tis there where yonder drooping willows weep
That brothers, sisters, all my kindred sleep;
Gone midst the cycles of the whelming past,
Their bodies mouldering, though their spirits last,
To live in mind, live near my aching breast,

Live with the eternal, live with all the blest.
'Tis there from distant climes, each lonesome day,
My soul returns to bless their hallowed clay.
Oh! dear Potomac, silvery, sylvan stream,
Though suns of glory on thy bosom gleam,
Not one there is so lustrous, dear to me
As that which beams along yon slumbering lea
Where reverence finds its temple, love its dome,
My life its pleasure and my heart its home.

But ploughing through translucent waves we speed
Past frowning forts which deathly havoc breed,
We hear the summons of the solemn bell
Tolling a requiem's sad and wierd-like spell.
Lugubrious thoughts pervade the whispering wind
And gloom the eddying wake that whirls behind.
For hearts are hushed where peaceful waters lave
The bosky bluffs that bear the nation's brave.
Oh, Great Immortal! how thy spirit free
Unbolted prison doors for liberty
To poise her pinions o'er the wearied land
And sacred guard what nature's laws demand.
Around thy tomb as by the patriots' fire

Let statesmen bend, and potentates admire
How freedom frolics through the peoples' brains
Binding the tyrant with their broken chains.
Yes, Spirit, free! Immortal Washington,
Protect the heritage thy deeds have won!
Then pass Columbia's to green Erin's shore
And make the nations free for ever more.

CHAPTER II.

Now, as the shadows darker, fainter grew,
Both bays and points pass rapidly from view,
Until at last nought met our craving eyes
Save lurking omens on the starless skies,
That like the death-watch clickings boded ill
And bade presageful hearts in prayer be still.
The waves made angry by the whirling winds,
Grew large as mountains to our anxious minds;
The thunder's boom aroused the vasty deep
Resounding down in caves where vigils keep
The demons of the storm. Infuriate
The captain grows, nor can he dissipate

The lowering gloom that seized the sullen crew
That oft had scoffed where wildest tempests blew.
The storm grew blacker, howling with dismay
Round foaming ships that flecked the furious bay,
Until outsounding din and billowy dash
The livid lightning launching lurid flash
Shook the expanse, and screamed with wild delight
At blasted hopes of men. Ah! horrid night!
How darksome, gloomy grow thy shifting shades
When dismal death the cruel sea pervades.
As some lone wanderer o'er the drifting sands
By the mirage in blank amazement stands
To gaze at gurgling springs and spectral seas
Mocking his fevered lips and tottering knees;
Then seeing dissolve into the ambient air
These vain delusions, fraught with hostile snare,
Will still push onward, brave the dread simoon,
To vanquish death hard by some cool lagoon;
So we, by elemental fiends unnerved,
Should have, undaunted, struggling hope preserved.
Yes, consternation midst this tempest reigned,
And warring waves a seeming victory gained.

All cry with anguish: Oh! the vessel leaks!
Whilst night's dark echoes sound the direful shrieks
Till all the empyrean, filled with fiendish cries,
Shakes and reverberates through clamorous skies.
The pilot, tossed near many a rock-bound shore,
Is blanched with panic midst this hell's uproar;
For frenzied palsy strikes the horny hand
That should both rudder and the waves command.
But wildest terror still augmenting grew;
It seized the captain, seized the skulking crew.
He cursed, blasphemed, he lost his sea-taught mind.
As reason vanished on the furious wind.

Alone, undaunted, e'en where courage dies,
A maiden knelt beneath those fearful skies;
The calm of heaven graced her virgin brow
Serene as was the figure on our prow.
She raised her chaplet through the groaning air
And heavenward poured sweet syllables of prayer,
Murmuring: "O Mary, ark of life's dark sea!
The diamond stars their brilliance pay to thee.
Come, Empress of the incense-laden skies,
And thy transcendent power immortalize;

Come from the orient on its crimsoned air;
Come, banish darkness and this fell despair;
Come from the splendors of thy golden throne;
Our hearts relieve, our failing faith condone;
Come, and recumbent on glad angels' wings,
Dispel this storm and claim our offerings.
Oh! potent regent of the angelic host,
Condnct us safely to some sheltering coast,
That we, thy children, may sweet hope caress,
Life's victory gain and happy souls possess:
And I through age's chill and bitter frost,
Whilst being victim to love's holocaust,
Will immolate on altars at thy shrine
Each sensuous pathos of this heart of mine."

Her votive prayer passed through the storm-clouds high
And won protection from the vaulted sky;
For the tempest frightened quits the laboring sea,
Leaving our steamer stranded on the lea.
The sea-tost trembling gained the auspicious shore,
Where hearts but lately dazed, bless God once more.
Intent they heard the pilot loud proclaim
That Virgin's prowess and miraculous fame,

Whose mediation locked in submerged caves
Both angry tempest and impetuous waves.
"Companions, friends," he said, "there came to me
Myria, maiden of glad Galilee.
She seemed to issue as a beaming light
Through rifted clouds that palled the cheerless night,
Gilding the fringes of the billows' crest
With lustrous halos on her beaconed breast;
Aureolas surround her peerless form
Debarring the anger of the raging storm;
Her graceful figure with bright beams arrayed,
No beauty lacked nor blemishes betrayed;
The moon beneath her radiant feet was paled,
Whilst twelve stars in a golden disk half-veiled,
Bedecked her comely brow and faultless head
With diadems of diamonds overspread.
By Nature's charms and Heavenly grace caressed,
She thus her mission joyously expressed:
'From far above the aerial woof inlaid
With astral brilliants by Jehovah made;
Through trackless prairies of ethereal space,
And borne on thought's electric wings apace,

I come to claim Potomac's maiden bride;
To still those shrieks and make the waves subside;
To calm emotions of each tortured soul,
And steer thy vessel to a friendly goal,
That mortals learn where faith's grand dogma guides,
How safety on the surging ocean rides.
When fear pervading thy heart's shivering blood,
Had robbed it of its ebbing and its flood,
Thou shouldst have raised thy suffering soul to me
And hailed me victress of the boisterous sea;
For heavy hearts can dangers never bear,
Unless my Father, Son and Spouse be there.'

"Then touching with translucent hands the wheel,
Which deftly turns to this endeared appeal,
She stretches forth the heaven-commanding wand
And peering into darkening space beyond,
She said: 'Oh tempest! let thy anger cease;
Calm! lull these waters and these winds to peace.'
"Then clouds are riven and the moon-beams shine
Athwart the bosom of the shimmering brine,
And havenward our vessel turned her keel,
Obeying Mary at the pilot's wheel."

Let scoffing skeptics all such truths decry,
And to effects a primal cause deny;
They'll find when sailing death's great ocean hence
That nature's laws are ruled by Providence.

Thus having heard, the sandy shores we woo;
We bless the heavens and our pilot new.
Yes, as the urchin when his task is o'er,
Will better breathe beyond the irksome door,
And piping freedom through his whistling toy,
Will soon the sorrows of the past destroy;
So we, removed from off the heaving main,
Awaked the echoing woods with this refrain:

We hail thee, Mary, Mercy's Queen!
To toilers on the shore,
And Mother of the silvery sheen
Where death's dark surges roar;
We hail Thee as the wondrous guide
Of every chivalrous keel;
Salute Thee as the ocean's bride,
The Virgin of the Wheel.

Let tempests scourge the vasty deep

And drive waves to the sky,
We'll cleave the brine, up, up the steep
Till heaven we descry;
For now there is a pilot dear
With heart like burnished steel,
Who'll be henceforth when storms appear,
The Virgin of the Wheel.

Let sinners style her refuge sweet
To wanderers o'er the sands;
Let mariners her welcome greet
When tost near rocky strands;
Her tripping steps, like rays of dawn,
To us shipwrecked reveal—
More graceful than the sylvan fawn—
The Virgin of the Wheel.

Ere man reposed in blissful shade,
Ere stars were decked with light,
Ere nature's laws were kindly made
For changing day and night,
She was in God's omniscience
Most beautiful and leal,

The Mother of Omnipotence,
The Virgin of the Wheel.

CHAPTER III.

Our chanting ceased; but on the barren shore
The billows bursting, sing for ever more,
Resounding o'er the pines and foaming main
The lingering echoes of our loved refrain.
Thus having sung the praises of the Queen
Whose sparkling glory lit the heaven's sheen,
We turn to her whose prayerful, placid eyes
Portrayed how faith the stormy seas defies.
Camilla was her honored Christian name,
And far extended was her queenly fame;
She oft assuaged the hunger of the poor,
And clothed the ragged tramp that passed her door:
Her humble mien, her prowess in the chase.
Her stately form and more than magic grace.
Had won renown on every hill and creek
From Shenandoah to the Chesapeake.
At length amidst the shipwrecked scene appears

Paul Clifford, friend of all her by-gone years.
His heaving bosom, like the ocean, bore
Fond friendship's waves to lave each murmuring shore.
And like defiant cliffs that crown the strand
Hurling unfriendly waters from the land.
His mind prolific, clearest thoughts portrayed,
Repelling falsehood's billows undismayed;
His voice responsive to kind mercy's call,
Invoked fond blessings on the great and small.
He, firmly standing with majestic mien,
Bowed low, thus speaking to Potomac's queen:
"Camilla, daughter of celestial power,
What cogent charm conceived this fairy bower?
What great enchantment hast thou bravely used
That baffled Neptune and his ways confused?
Was it thy chaplet or some magic spell
That hushed the tempest's sad, sepulchral knell?
Ah, yes! I saw thee, placid as the ice,
Bequeathe thy heart to bloody sacrifice
If Mary, hope of sinful, shipwrecked men,
Would guide us safely to some sheltered glen.
Then, high above the uproar of wind and rain

Thy voice mellifluent as an old refrain,
Invoked the heavens and the Virgin mild
To drown the demons of the ocean wild.
"I cherish faith that makes the dead arise,
That chains the lightning in the frightening skies,
That bids old ocean and his winds be still,
Submissive servants to a master's will.
Cold reason never yet awoke the dead
Mouldering putrid in their earthen bed;
Nor augurs it of meadows green with joy
Where purling streamlets suffering hearts decoy;
Where spring eternal rules the spirits' home
And lights with lasting love the vaulted dome.
Grant me, kind Lord, an ardent faith like hers
To teach me more than what the sense avers;
For Reason's gorgeous sun sinks glittering down
That starry faith may flash Thy great renown
Wherefore, Camilla, from Faith's lustrous fane
Where Reason loves to dwell, yet not to reign,
Unfold thy annals and especially reveal
The Virgin's grandeur at the pilot's wheel."
Just as the morning star peeped o'er the bay

As gorgeous usher of the glorious day,
The rippling waters hearkening to her speech,
Floated it on around the sandy beach
Till all the shipwrecked 'neath the towering pines
Believed that Faith the greatest truth enshrines:
"Near where the Rappahannock's waters seek
The broad blue bosom of the Chesapeake
My parents loving passed their sunny days
In gladly teaching God's unerring ways.
They preached no dogmas to my youthful mind,
But Nature's lessons of the grandest kind.
Who based, they said, these cone-shaped hills
Cyclopic guardsmen of the troutlets' rills?
Who grassed the valleys fertile, smiling, green,
To brouse the tinkling herds on this demesne?
They shield our bodies, bar the stinging cold,
Soothe hunger's pains, and penury withhold.
Who made the Rappahannock, rapid, grand,
To drain the forest, bless the cereal land?
See yon Potomac with its sea-like heart
Wooing the commerce of each distant mart!
Who planted in her rich, prolific breast

Those oysters perfect and those fishes best?
Who made those oaken sentinels o'erhead
Bivouac for years the manes of the dead?
Whose womb begets the rain and glittering dew,
Or ice and frost where cries the winter-mew?
Who maketh wisdom in man's mind to grow[1]
Or causeth cautious cocks what o'clocks to crow?
Who shutteth raging seas within strong bounds,
Unlocketh thunder's gates as earth resounds?
Who makes the order splendid on the earth
By which the animals in willing mirth,
Obey the beck of man? In boundless space
Who poised the stars? who rolls them in their place?
Find, if thou canst, in grand primordial laws,
How moving matter moved without a cause;
Or, tell us how it was that thought began
And faster than the electric current ran
To look for bliss. These gifts which we possess
Must to a moving, not moved, power confess.
'Twas thus I learned the Eternal God to see
In all things under His Lordly canopy."

1. Job, 38th chapter.

Here Paul: "Camilla! Ah, too well we know
Wherefore the winds and horrid tempests blow;
How God Eternal in His ways supreme
Made earth and sun and man and lightning's gleam.
But speak of Mary, whom the storms reveal
In modest grandeur at the pilot's wheel."
Again with flushing on her favored cheek
As kissed by solar rays off Chesapeake,
She thus surpassed Aurora's virgin ray
In guiding nescience o'er life's darksome way:
"Oh, Matter's Mother! Spirits' noble Queen!
Thou robed in majesty, lapped in heavenly sheen,
Deign every fancy in my heart anneal
That I, Thy grandeur to these friends reveal,
Ere jumbling chaos made void's ether roar,
Or spirit flashed from God's abundant store;
Yea, ere the molecule and protoplasm
Were moulded neatly in the ethereal chasm,
She was the victrice of the accursed hell
Before the angels, Eve or Adam fell;
Was possibly conceived eternally before
An atom moved on chaos' darksome shore;

Was the stately Virgin whose intrepid seed
Should every scheme of Satan's reign impede;
Should be the cure for the serpent's sting,
And happiness to poisoned mortals bring.
She is the hinge whereon the worlds were swung
The one, before whose birth, the people loved and sung.
Ordained, in fine, from all eternity
The Sacred Mother of Our Lord to be.
She budded flowers on the sin-parched earth,
Blossoming immortelles of hope and mirth.

"The Angel Gabriel in ethereal flight
From shores resplendent in their golden light,
Passed countless stars in space's boundless sea
With tidings to the Maid of Galilee.
And clad in livery of the triune throne
Which silvery o'er his outstretched pinions shone,
Saluted Mary—styled her 'full of grace'
And blessed above the daughters of her race.
But she, not knowing all that message bore,
Affirmed the virgin pledge she made before;
Preferring thus to wear the maiden's joy
Than to incarn the Infant Saviour Boy.

Yet when the angel in her wish concurred,
She said: 'O Lord! according to Thy word
Let it be done—Thy handmaid humbly bows
To be Thy mother, but preserve her vows—
Oh ravished skies! A Virgin has conceived—
God kisses nature and it is relieved.

"The seer of Patmos, with prophetic sight,
E'en rapt to Heaven's gates in swift delight,
Peered through those portals with bright gems inlaid,
Beholding Mary with the sun arrayed,
With crescent moon beneath her silvery feet
And twelve stars round her peerless head to greet
The kisses of her Lord in infant form;
'Twas she the pilot saw amid the storm."

And having thus from Scripture well portrayed
Celestial beauty in the Jewish Maid,
Camilla, with the lamp of reason, shows
How God most perfect gifts on Her bestows:
"Without some perfect type we would complain
Of each defective link in nature's chain;
Would say that God, omnipotent and wise,
Should have created with His mercy's eyes;

Should not permit us grope through blinding mists
Unless a modal faultlessly exists
To prove His justice, prove His love supreme,
Prove His omniscience in creation's scheme.
He, having planned the universe's chart,
Appointed it in each generic part.
By laws unchanging He made spirit pure
That thought be borne, that Reason's throne endure.
He then made matter, moving cells and orbs,
And gases which organic life absorbs.
From these components primal man was made
To govern earth and starry realms invade.
But Adam sinned to please the splendid Eve,
When both equipped for life, the death conceive.
Sad vagrants from their paradisal rest,
With creeping sorrows and huge pangs oppressed,
They saw the future fed with growing woes
And obstacles each longing wish oppose;
Their mournful dirges filled the air with sighs
Whilst embrionic hope forever dies.
But God's grand prescience seeing them disobey,
From years eternal had prepared the way

That their descendants to time's wreck afar
Might enter Heaven through the gates ajar.
Yes, Boundless Love designing more than this,
Gave earth His blessing and creative kiss,
When plastic matter to the spirit grew
And Mary blossomed on the sparkling dew,
To be the Mother of the Eternal Child,
Remaining virgin, crystalline and mild;
To rule as Empress of the empyrean sky
And teach lorn mortals how to live and die.
'Twas thus our Pilot o'er life's ocean rose
To steer all storm-vexed to the Port's repose.

"If gloom hang heavy on the human heart
When blinding mists make solar rays depart,
What dizzy grief would seize the exploring mind
If it could only imperfection find?
Without a model free from flaw or stain,
How could we virtue's golden goal attain?
Could God espouse a nature stained with sin,
Or one that had the slightest taint within?
Wherefore resolved to wed the human race,
He made His Mother, Virgin, full of grace.

Oh! Star of Morning! Mary! Thou art She,
The fearless petrel on life's troubled sea.
"God virgin is by essence, effluence too,
By all processions which from Him ensue.
'Tis thus the Son and Holy Ghost proceed,
Virgins by nature of the Father's seed;
And since the Word-made-flesh has emanated
From Infinite Love in Mary's womb created,
That womb needs be a diamond virgin prism,
Sparkling with truth's and virtue's cataclysm,
To woo the Omnipotent from His royal throne,
To be her Father, Spouse, her flesh and bone.
Just as bright solar beams will harmless pass
Into a chamber through immaculate glass,
To light the darkness and dispell the gloom,
So beamed Eternal truth in Mary's womb,
With one sweet nature from her royal blood,
And one begotten ere creation's bud.
Which union hypostatic brought no stain
Unto the Virgin Mother, neither pain.
Thus Mary, 'nature's solitary boast,'
Became the comely bride of Holy Ghost,

The Mother of the Increate made man,
Enceptive child of God ere worlds began.
More than the finite we behold around,
Not infinite, save where endless wants abound;
Near to the God-head by sweet ties entwined
Greater than Angels, men and spheres combined,
She is the complement of the Trinity,
Man's hope and refuge on this life's wild sea.
Creation's noblest! Queen, where God is King!
The vault cerulean with thy honors ring!
The spheres exult! Earth, seas and men proclaim
The triune glory of thy virgin fame.
Ye friends, rejoice; ye mothers, maids, admire
How Mary gleams from Love's unquenching fire,
The Morning Star above the darkest way
Heralding Him that ushers endless day."

CHAPTER IV.

This speech, long echoing on the attentive shore,
Proclaimed our Pilot's grandeur evermore.
Even the Captain, well in Scriptures read,

Confessed his faith and to the assembly said:

"If she be mother of the Immortal dead,
Whose cross triumphant and victorious tomb,
Broke for slaves the galling chains of doom;
Then she is herald of earth's orient day
Whom prophets golden-tongued thus grand portray:
'O, who is she that cometh fresh as morn
From desert dreary, darksome and forlorn,
Fair as the moon, bright as the tropic's day,
And valiant as an army in array?
Thou art all comely, tenderest, sweetest dove,
Nor spot, nor wrinkle mars thy ardent love.
Thou art the spikenard 'midst the blooming dale,
The Lily which the jocund fields exhale.
Arise! Make haste! My beautiful, and come;
The winter is past, the wailing winds are dumb;
The vines in flower yield a sweet perfume,
The turtles coo, the nascent apples bloom;
From Libanus haste, proceed, my royal spouse!
The roe and hart with leopards kindly browse.
Arise, ye south winds! on your pinions blow
Aromas where polluted waters flow.

Pomegranates laugh! Ye vineyard's smiles concur!
The chasm is bridged by virgin voyager.'
I greet, Oh mother! greet thy heavenly form;
I hail thee Pilot of each surgeful storm!
And should yon vessel leave the entombing sand
Thou first and fairest shalt her crew command."

And having thus the Heaven's Queen addressed,
His heart still sighing and with love oppressed,
He brusquely uttered to the wondering crowd
What should have never been confessed aloud:

"My heart, Camilla, to thee fondly goes
As dewy diamonds woo the blushing rose;
My grateful homage, soul and mind expand
To plight thee honor with my trusty hand."

Here grand and fearless as the glacier's cheek
When trembling ere it leaves the craggy peak,
Paul Clifford, musing by the Captain's side,
Reined in the avenging wrath and thus replied:

"As skies are crimsoned by the breath of morn
So scarlet blushes light her cheek with scorn;
Like sunbeams loth to kiss the Arctic Pole,
She spurns your offer, spurns your peerless soul.

Give all your fealty to creation's Queen,
The fairest flowery-kirtled ever seen.
She'll pluck the arrow from your bleeding heart
And balm to wounds and wine to thirst impart."

Thus having spurned the captain's rash conceit,
His sapphire-eyes, the heaven-saved kindly greet.

"Six summer suns have waned, and winters hoar
Have wailed their sorrows by oblivion's door
Since lingering by yon broad and sweeping tide,
I claimed the fair Camilla, as my bride.
Since then the restless waters ebbed and flowed,
Since then the meadows have been six times mowed.
Still, still the answer locked within her breast
Is mute as echo on the billow's crest;
And though hoar frosts have often killed the leaf;
Though hope has worn a thousand times to grief;
The same sweet love reigns empress of my soul,
Eternal reigns and reigns beyond control.
Here let it govern peerlessly discreet
Or die, if die it can, at Mary's feet.
Then list, ye rays that bring propitious day,
And take my heart to distant skies away,

Where honeyed by the everlasting dews,
It will but sweetness on the earth diffuse.
Ye scowling pines, sad murmuring in the air,
Bend low your heads and shield me from despair!
Ye melancholy waves from foreign lands,
Bearing their sorrows to Columbia's strands,
Take back my dolors with your plaintive tone
Saddening the heedless earth from zone to zone.
Ye friends, ye stars, ye heavens nodding, hear,
Ye guardian spirits, to my soul appear,
Weaving it garlands aromatic, sweet,
To strew beneath the maiden's comely feet.
Ah! thou Camilla, hear my last appeal!
The Arctic snows woo not more pliant steel.
Behold my bosom's desolating fire
Kindled by angels as the funeral pyre,
Burning my flesh and blood, but welding love
Immortal as the Infinite above.
It haunts my midnights, haunts my lonesome days;
Dwells with my silence, sings my dreary lays;
Feeds on my memory, guides the coming years;
Lives with my laughter, flows on gloomy tears.

Ah! were this heart the azure void unknown,
If filled with fragrance from fresh roses blown,
It then unworthy and too small would be
To hold the affection of my soul for thee.
Yet it I proffer thee, with fealty true,
As ever minstrel sang or knighthood knew,
If thou, Camilla, noble, generous, fair,
But guide my wandering steps from dark despair."
A burning blush suffused the maiden's brow,
Forging the fetters of her hallowed vow,
As unperturbed by love or craven fear,
She thus addressed them winsomely sincere:
"Upon Westmoreland's hills, some years ago,
Whilst watching these same briny waters flow,
A tumult rose within my amorous soul
Betwixt affection and my mind's control.
Methinks creation pleased my sensuous eye,
Mankind the most and then the star-lit sky.
I loved the river, flowers, leaf and fern;
Loved all things greatly and each one in turn;
Music's delirium, poetry's painted thought,
Aroused my fancy, all my senses bought,

But such sensations left long, yearning aches;
Left thirstings which no earthly fountain slakes;
Left me, sick, surfeited with transient bliss,
Unfit for future worlds, untrained for this.
So yesternight when human hearts were vain
To quell the tempest, or the sea restrain,
My soul untrammelled passed aerial space
And hovering fondly near the Throne of Grace,
It found the Architect whose Sacred Heart
Designed the universe in every part.
He made these longings, made this sacred thirst,
These hearts by love oppressed, by sin accurst;
That still insatiate, sighing for greater joys,
Find each emotion filled with base alloys.
Alas! No pleasure blooms beneath the skies
That all the senses fully satisfies.
Yea, princely riches, pride and clamoring lusts
Beget ephemeral bliss, with long disgusts.
E'en lovers to the nuptial altar bring
The roses' perfume and their thorny sting.
Ah! yes, such pleasures end in pestering pain
Whilst earth-bred cravings prove so often vain;

For God's infinitude is not too grand
To over-fill our hearts from strand to strand.
Wherefore last night when anger whipped the deep,
I gave the gracious Lord my soul to keep;
Too late—Oh! Sacred Spouse—perhaps too late,
And yet I vowed to be Thy celibate.

Ah! fearless Paul, thou heard'st my virgin vow,
When clouds Cimmerian whelmed our vessel's prow—
When demons dire, with dreadful doom desired
To howl our requiems and so conspired;
Thou heard'st my sacrifice ascend on high,
And drive the demons down the dolorous sky.
Thou saw'st our steamer stagger to the shore,
Despite the breakers, neath the tempest's roar;
And thou shouldst rather crave the lightning's stroke
Than ask me now that vestal vow revoke.
No, dearest friend of all my girlhood days,
Take back thy offerings, with thy human praise;
Take back thy heart, as grand as ocean blue,
And Christian virtues o'er its expanse strew;
Let zephyrs wooing kiss its boundless shore,
And laden with its fragrance evermore

Waft me aromas of thy unseen soul
To make life happy and my heart console;
And yet, oh! perfect man! away! avaunt!
But let thy spirit these old waters haunt;
And mine returning, too, from safe retreat
Perchance thine own may much more fondly greet.
But go! my heart till death will ne'er entwine
Its dearest tendrils round thy sturdy vine—
They creep aloft to clasp the Holy Fane,
And clinging there eternally remain—
I'll haste to solitude's sequestered cell,
Where mournful musings with the echoes dwell;
I'll track the footprints of Christ's blessed feet
On Golgotha's height, in bloody joy to greet
The iron crown (impressed upon my brow),
That bears the jewels of the virgin's vow—
I go to suffer—yes, to bleed for rest
That thou be happy and we both be blest—
'T is fated sadly and with doom severe,
That greatest loves are not requited here;
That we must part, alas! to meet no more
This side our triumphs, on the eternal shore.

As waters jetting from the mountain side,
And rippling laughter as they leap and glide,
Will, babbling, bounding, hugging brambly brake,
Find various courses to some tranquil lake,
Where, blending smoothly with increased delight,
Will fonder and still fonder reunite,
So we, though traveling rugged roads apart,
Will meet again within the Sacred Heart—
That shoreless ocean of eternal love
That buoys up earth and rolling orbs above—
Will smile at rocky steeps and wearied ways,
At fleeting fancies of these youthful days;
Will bless the fate we now so much deplore,
And love still better than we loved before—
For chaste affections doomed on earth to part,
Will endless blossom on the resurrected heart.

Thus ending she, Paul Clifford bowed his head
Unto the sacrifice, and gravely said:
"How lorn these shadows in this stifling air,
Mantling my mirth with woes beyond my share;
Yet still, perchance, in glimmering faith I'll find
The balm assuaging for my wounded mind—

Oh! Thou Eternal Cause, of causes made,
Come guide my wanderings and my heart invade,
That like Potomac's queen, my soul may rest
In essence infinite, endless, ever blest.
And since Camilla, in thy sacred shrine,
Thy virtues glowing will increasing shine,
Let me adore there, lingering near thy side,
To bless thy nuptials as a heavenly bride;
To chant the glory of thy Royal Spouse,
And reap the fruitage of prolific vows.
My heart, like thine, is on the Altar's fires,
To be consumed as God alone desires.
I'll strew its ashes at the Saviour's feet,
Will wear His thorny crown, should it be meet—
Ah! yes, to thy Espoused I bend my knee
And offer more than e'er I promised thee.
I offer this, my greatest sacrifice,
And one so sacred that no earthly price
Could purchase it, since thou thyself art priest
And victim, too; myself, indeed, the least,
And thee the very holocaust of love
I give, that great Jehovah from above

May, when thy sacrifice shall cease to be,
Unite our hearts to His eternally;
For vows so sacred, oblations so sublime—
Their fruitage gain beyond the wreck of time."
Thus speaking, Paul dark bloody crosses bore
Towards life's Calvary forever more.
But up the empurpled height he pants along
With many a grief and many a heart-sick song,
Until, oh! joy, when he the summit gains,
The splendid vista ends his woes and pains.
Thus burdens, tempests, warrings of the soul
Surcease, when we have reached the expectant goal.

CHAPTER V.

But now just where the great horizon lay
Bounding the bosom of the briny bay,
A steamer's smoke appeared to joyful eyes,
When louder, shriller than the eagle's cries,
Resounding cheers arouse the convex sky,
And then, rebounding on the billows, die.
Hearing the echoes from invisible spheres,

She, signalling, towards the ship-wrecked steers.
How gracefully she cleaves the foamy deep,
Rocking the waters, lulled to tranquil sleep!
She nears the beach, the shores the captain hear,
As friendly persons on her deck appear;.
Fond greetings pass—the plaudits mingling roar,
And glad the cabins of the Excelsior.[1]

Meanwhile, climbing up the craft's careening side,
We gladly sing, as swells the flowing tide;
We leave Point Lookout's sandy, barren shore,
And track the wanderings of Lord Baltimore.
Expatriated by intolerant claims,
He sought asylum on the noble James;
But there, refused a home because of creed,
The Ark and Dove[2] up broad Potomac speed—
'Twas here by oaks that shade St. Mary's breast,
This weary exile found a peaceful rest;
'Twas here for God and man this Catholic band
Made freedom's home and called it Mary-land.
'Twas here the flag of liberty, unfurled,

1 Steamer on the Potomac.

2 Names of vessels containing the Maryland Pilgrims.

Alarmed the conscience of the obsequious world.
Thy name, immortal Calvert, grows with days,
As grow those passing islands, points and bays;
And time will come when freedom's sons will crown
With golden wreaths, thy great and good renown;
Will raise a shaft on yon St. Clement's Isle,[1]
Will rocks on carved rocks to heaven pile,
That from its apex future eyes may see
This earth a shrine of holy liberty.

Past Piney Point we cut the foaming brine,
And then around some pretty islands twine;
We pass St. Catharine's and St. Margaret's isles,
Leaving St. George's gay in verdant smiles.
There, too, discern Church Point and Mattox Creek,
Which tourists expert ever fondly seek;
And yet, alas! no monument there remains
To guide the pilgrim o'er the vast domains,
Save an old chimney, houseless and alone,
Which, like a giant framed of fleshless bone,
Guards the grim silence of the dead around,
And watches o'er the consecrated ground—

1 Now called Blackiston Island.

Where Washington thrice fifty years ago
Was born, to travail o'er a people's woe;
To flash his falchion through the serfs' dark sky,
To free a nation and its foes defy.
Then let our Congress buy the hallowed spot,
By Heaven blest, by thrifty men forgot.
Then raise a column worthy of our land,
But always let the smokeless chimney stand--
A relic of the immortal ingle-side,
Where rocked was he who is our nation's guide—
To prove a model, till earth's years are spent,
Of the sky-reaching National Monument.

And now by Chapel Point we glide along,
With sparkling wit and many a pleasant song,
'Till there we see renowned Aquia Creek,
Around whose bluffs the countless spirits shriek
The woes, the wants of internecine war
And wanton waste which statesmen great abhor.
Ah! living spirits of the immortal dead,
Sing on thy dolors o'er thy bodies' bed;
Till they arise to don the blue and gray,
And drive the ghouls of future wars away.

And called it Blessed Lady of Axican.

Oh! grand Potomac! on thy ample breast
How many fond associations rest!
Yet still thy ancient annals, unexplored,
Are filled with grandeur and with beauty stored.
How long thy bosom bore the Indian Braves
To hunt the wild fowl on thy fruitful waves;
How long the war-whoops of the Iroquois
Aroused thy swarthy tribes to savage war,
Are rapt in darkness of thy untold past,
And sleep in death with Powhatan the last.

But history tells, three hundred years ago,
How near to Occaquan or Quantico,
Apostles came and boisterous seas defied
Bringing the tidings of the Crucified.
They taught the red man how to sow and reap,
And how to angle from the finny deep;
Also religion pure and undefiled,
Its morals rigid and its doctrines mild.
'Twas here, "Oh! River of the burniug pine,"[1]
By gnarled oaks and by thy virgin vine
They built a log church for the cruel clan,

1 Called so by the Indians.

'Tis thus Virginia, erst thy land was named;
Long 'ere the camp-fires of the English flamed,
An altar rose unto the Lord of Hosts
To bless the natives of thy savage coasts.
Thy sons, oh! Guzman, led the chivalrous band,
Claiming for Christ the inhospitable land;
But Loyola's children gained the great renown,
And wear the glory of the martyr's crown.

At length, Glymount and Marshall Hall move by,
As mirth unbounded fills the fragrant sky.
Past jagged points we cleave the waters bright,
Telling the wonders of our stormy night;
We laugh, we sing to every passing shore,
And glad Potomac smiles forever more.

Meanwhile, descending to his balmy sleep,
As shadows o'er the darkening valleys creep,
The sun's last greeting kisses the Nation's Dome,
In welcome to our safe arrival home.
At last, in mingled joys and sorrows swell
The heaving hearts that sigh the last farewell.
But 'ere the parting we together kneel
And bless the Virgin at the Pilot's Wheel.